

Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes – April 7, 2020

Senators Present: Hisham Al-Bataineh, Matthew Alexander, Ambrose Anoruo, Rudolf Bohm, Lucy Camacho, Jieming Chen, David Cutton, Michelle Garcia, Maribel Gonzalez-Garcia, Jeff Glick, James Glusing, Kelly Hall, Simona Hodis, Michael Houf, Kendra Huff, Patricia Huskin, Robert Kowalsky, Ya-Wen Liang, Steven Lukefahr, Tanner Machado, Lifford McLauchlan, Craig A. Meyer, Kyle Milsap, Richard Miller, Patrick Mills, Mais Najim, Jesse Orth, Larry Peel, Humberto Perotto, William Procasky, Christine Radcliff, Kathleen Rees, Chika Rosenbaum, Alex Sanchez-Behar, Hans Schumann, Nick J. Sciallo, Hui Shen, Ari Sherris, Amber Shipherd, Harmeet Singh, Marsha Sowell, Velda Soydas, Ramiro Torres, Benjamin Turner, Alinna Umphreys, Maria Velez-Hernandez, Subbarao Yelisetti, Teresa Young

Senators Absent: Manuel Flores, Bruce Marsh, Ryan Paul, Jennifer Sholtis, Jack Shorter, Haibin Su

Call to Order and Quorum Call.

This meeting of the Faculty Senate was held and recorded online through Blackboard Collaborate due to COVID-19 social distancing requirements. A recording of this meeting can be found on the [Faculty Senate Website](#) under the heading [Digital Faculty Senate Meetings](#).

At 3:37 p.m. President Anoruo asked the parliamentarian, Michelle Garcia, if enough members were present for a quorum. Senator Garcia replied in the affirmative.

I. Approval of Minutes from March 2020 Faculty Senate Meeting.

President Anoruo asked for approval of the previous meeting minutes. Senator Miller motioned; Senator Garcia seconded. Minutes were approved.

II. Presentations

a) Provost Allen Rasmussen

i) Student Grading

- Motion received from the Faculty Senate Executive Committee to a temporary keeping of the A, B, C,D,F grading system, however letting students request a grade to be changed to P/F after the semester was over. ¹
- Pass does not count on GPA; Fail does count on GPA and the Provost and President Hussey agreed choosing P/F would harm students
- Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory neither impact GPA

¹ EC MOTION: that we temporarily keep the ABCDF grading system; however, we let the student request their grade to be changed to Pass/Fail, or Satisfactory/unsatisfactory after the semester is over.

- S/U gives credit/no credit
- Students have until May 19th to change their letter grade to S/U (grades are due by May 18th)
- Faculty will turn in grades as they regularly do
- Students will be able to go into Blue & Gold and select which classes they would like to change from a letter grade to S/U
- All students need to meet with their advisor to decide what is best option for the student's future goals
- Trying to create flexibility for the students in the classes. How do we help students who are going through this very unprecedented time?
- Regular grading system - 60+ gives credit / Below 60 you get no credit
- This grading policy is a one-time deal because of this unusual semester. Over 1,600 courses went from being taught one way the first half, to being taught a very different way the second half.
- This is a difficult transition for everyone (faculty & students).
- He appreciates that some of the faculty have done some pretty amazing things to work with our students.
- Accredited program with required grade, that needs to be maintained.

ii) **Student Rating of Instruction**

- SRI's will be distributed for this semester, but they will not be used in evaluations for the Spring 2020 semester.

iii) **Tenure clock extension**

- Tenure track faculty can be extended by 1 yr. Please work with your department chair and dean.

iv) **The Provost then started to respond to questions that had been entered in the chat.** [all questions were copied directly from the chat]

- **Q:** Senator Bohm asked "Why could the decision (about grading) not wait until today so we could discuss it, if April 30th is decision point? Students seem very concerned and have asked me why I voted this way".

A: The news media and students were calling on a regular basis asking when we would be making a decision. Some students were threatening to withdraw from TAMUK if they were not going to be given any options. In addition to grading change, we have also extended the drop date to April 30th.

- **Q:** Senator Yelisetti asked “Students that are already failing before the Spring break irrespective of their performance for the remainder of the semester, do we still give them an option of pass/fail? They will obviously choose the pass option, even though they know they will fail”.

A: If they were failing before and continue to fail, yes its going to be a pass/fail. If they choose the option, it will be a U, they will get no credit, it will not be calculated in their GPA, and the course will have to be repeated.

- **Q:** Senator Shipherd asked “You said this is a one-time deal. Will we go back to regular letter grading for summer?”

A: At this point they are looking at regular grading for the summer. They are going to have to work with faculty who are doing online teaching for the Summer.

Summer 1 will be online, and he has a hard time seeing how Summer 2 would be face to face. We are hoping for the best but might have to stay online both Summer sessions.

For the summer if you have taught an online course and have completed the Quality Matters training, then your course will be a graded course. If you have not completed Quality Matters, or if the faculty does not have a strong virtual presence, then the course will probably be S/U.

- **Q:** Senator Lukefahr said “I am still unclear how this affects the C or better policy. If a student deserves a D grade but he/she chooses "S", then it seems that they will not need to repeat the course?”

A: Senator Lukefahr is correct. For this semester they will be given credit for a D. If that student got a 65, are we sure they would not have gotten a 70 if they were face to face?

- **Q:** Senator Kowalsky asked that “students may make this decision without understanding the implications on how it could impact grad schools applications (i.e. S/U not accepted). Can we not require them to have to meet with advisers instead of just recommend to make sure they are making the best decision.”

A: They told the students they “must” meet with their advisors. If he could figure out how to place a hold to do this, he would.

- **Q:** Senator Bohm asked “shouldn't the policy be put forth by the faculty senate? Especially if it is being sold as being made by the faculty senate?”

A: He is not saying it is made by the Faculty Senate. It is a recommendation from the Faculty Senate Executive Committee.²

- **Q:** Senator Chen asked “What is your estimate of the type of fall 2020 teaching? Online or face-to-face?”

A: Need to be prepared to make sure many core courses are online. He thinks many parents are going to be concerned sending students to campus. We are primarily a residential campus, and if we are going to maintain our students. We need to have most of our core at least 1 course online. Talked to the Deans about transfer students. If you are coming in as a junior, can we make sure some of those courses are online. What we need to advertise to our students is if you want to be a Javelina and you are nervous, we want you to be able to join TAMUK and we want to put that first semester online. That is how he feels about Fall 2020. We need to have more online course than in the past. It is just something we need to be prepared for.

- **Q:** Senator Velez-Hernandez asked, “If a student chooses S/U now and later (i.e. three years from now) they find out they need a letter grade (grad school, professional school, teachers...) can they still do a grade change?”

A: At this time there is not a process to make that change. On transcripts for Spring 2020 there will be a statement saying “These grades are a result of the Corona Virus Pandemic “so that is allocated in their transcript. The students are being told that once they make the choice there is no going back.

He wanted to say that this is a tremendous impact on all of us. The faculty as much as the students. He actually told a reporter yesterday; He bows to what you guys have done. We have put 1,600 courses into a virtual format. What has been astonishing to him is after the first week we are not getting continual complaints from students. He has gotten comments from students that they appreciate faculty are getting online, recording and showing how to do math and Chemistry problems. This has been a tremendous effort from the faculty to make this work for the students, and he appreciates that.

- **Q:** Senator Hodis said “Teaching math online, really requires writing on the whiteboard. So we need good tablets to write on in order to really help while teaching.”

² <https://www.caller.com/story/news/education/2020/04/04/tamuk-students-can-choose-satisfactory-unsatisfactory-grade-method/2944957001/>

A: Dr. Hussey is trying to get different processes in line. They are looking to see what other technology we can get to be better prepared for the future. All available laptops but 1 have been checked out.

- **Q:** Final question was from Senator Bohm, “The Library seems to be in lockdown. I have had students that had trouble taking their exam at the library. They do not have their own laptop. Do we have a way to provide them access without harassment?”

A: The library is not in lockdown. Hours did change based on usage. Do now have to have an ID to enter, as a result of the city lockdown where community members were trying to come in since we are open. You have to be a registered student, staff or faculty member with your ID to enter the library.

III. Report of Officers

a) Senator Radcliff

i) University Emergency Management Team

I was asked to attend the University EMC meetings. They occur on Mondays and Thursdays. Most of the information reported at those meetings has either been sent out as emails or covered in the President’s Town Hall meeting. One recent item of note for faculty, please look over the ITS (ITech) newsletter that was sent out March 26, as it contains information on how to forward your office phone to your personal phone if you would like.

From the meeting yesterday April 6th, it was verified by AVP Goswami that faculty are to give letter grades, and that it will be up to the student if they want to change their grade to S/U after grades are posted. I mentioned that the email that was sent out Friday April 3rd was confusing to the faculty.

AVP Goswami also mentioned that there will be a survey sent to all students, faculty and staff asking for input on how the University is handling everything during COVID-19. The survey is expected to go out sometime this week.

There are still 254 students in the residence halls on campus.

ii) Provost Search Committee report

After the in-person interviews March 2-3rd, we asked the search firm to do reference checks on about 12 candidates. Of those we narrowed down the list to 4 highly recommend, and 3 recommend and submitted those names to President Hussey. When a small group of us met with President Hussey in person on March 20th before we left campus, at that time he said he is still trying to come up with a plan on how to proceed during COVID-19. He said he did not want to delay the search if it could be helped. I did remind him that it is imperative that the faculty be able to meet these candidates in some way (in person, virtually). President Hussey understood, and said that

he feels it is very important for the candidates to be able to physically come to Kingsville, to really get a feel for the campus and area.

b) Senate President Anoruo

i) Provost Search update

President Anoruo added that President Hussey told him that he will video interview 4 candidates with the intention of bringing 2 candidates to campus. He wants to bring them when faculty will be on campus. President Hussey said he needs to have faculty input before he makes his decision. Once COVID-19 eases and people return to campus the search will proceed.

ii) Promotion and Tenure Appeals

These are ongoing, and President Hussey will not waste time making the decisions. As soon as he hears from the committees, he will make his decision as soon as possible.

iii) Budget

Looking at all contingencies and opportunities to maximize the budget to have minimal effect on people and the University. Wants to make sure that whatever follows COVID-19, that student enrollment and budget has minimal effect on the TAMUK community.

iv) Hiring Freeze

Flexible hiring freeze. Any new hires have to be approved by President Hussey. This does not apply to grant/contract funded positions. Those positions can be hired through the regular channels.

v) Annual Report of the 2019-2020 Faculty Senate *(see handout)*

IV. Old Business

a) Religious Holy Days 2nd vote (2019-2020 Senators)

H.3 Student Absences

H.3.1 Student Absences on Religious Holy Days Under Texas Education Code, §51.911, all institutions of higher education shall excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absences.

[Texas Administrative Code RULE §4.4 Student Absences on Religious Holy Days](#)

The student should notify each faculty member of this proposed absence as early in the semester as possible.

Senator Schumann moved to approve the wording to be corrected in the Faculty Handbook. Senator Sowell seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

b) Action Plan for 2019-2020 Taskforce Reports

i) Base pay raise / Faculty salary - Senator Garcia

President Hussey said we had to restore the word merit to our original motion, because the Texas State Legislature is the only entity that can give cost of living raise. The A&M System is only allowed to give raises based on merit. In the proposed budget that went to the Board of Regents this month a 1% merit raise to everyone on campus (faculty, staff administrators) salary was included.³

ii) Summer Pay – Senator Garcia

This issue needs to be carried forward by the new senate.

iii) Faculty Overload Pay – Senator Bohm

Put together an assessment. There are some problems because a thorough study has not been put together. Different Colleges do different things. Best recommendation is that after a certain number of semesters, they should be paid what they are owed. It is recommended that faculty keep their own documentation on when they teach overloads and include that information in their annual reports, that way the department Chair has signed it. No official policy yet, but hoping that this can be worked on in the new Senate.

iv) Improve IT Infrastructure and Capability - No Report.

v) Shared Governance - No Report

vi) Workload Input / Lecturer Course Load - No Report

vii) Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at TAMUK – No Report

V. Standing Committee Reports

a) Committee on Committees – No Report

b) Election Committee

The ballots for the At-Large seats and the Mechanical & Industrial Engineering department were counted in an online meeting Friday March 20th.

Results are as follows:

Mechanical & Industrial Engineering – Larry Peel

College of Arts & Sciences – Jeff Glick

College of Business Administration – Kendra Huff

³ It was not presented this month as was originally planned as the programmatic budget review meeting was postponed until later this year.

c) Resolution and By-laws/Handbook Committee – No Report

VI. Reports from Committees Reporting to the Senate

a) Administrator Evaluation Committee

The 2020 evaluation is currently open! It will run from April 1-15th. If you have not received an email from TAMUK Faculty Senate, please let me know. The first set of emails went out on April 1st, another reminder went out yesterday April 6th, and a final reminder will go out April 15th.

As of 10:25am April 6th 253 of 4763 surveys were completed. The rate is 5%

If you are in a department with fewer than 5 faculty members, anonymity could be compromised.

Just as a reminder an administrator must have been in their position for over 1 year to be eligible for evaluation. For instance, Dr. Bain the Interim dean of College of Ed is not included, nor are most of the department chair's for the College of Engineering.

The other issue that was brought to my attention is that, even though there are 2 links for Rasmussen in his two positions they are not separate evaluations. This is something the committee will address for next year's evaluation.

President Ambrose added a reminder to only fill out evaluations for the administrators you have had interactions with and feel comfortable providing feedback.

b) Annual Faculty Lecture Committee

It was recommended that the incoming Senate President appoint a new chair for this committee, so that the committee can move forward. It is policy that the last recipient be the Chair.

c) Faculty Benefits Committee – (see *handout*)

d) Faculty Evaluation Committee

Despite the late start, faculty have already experienced a positive result of our efforts this year. Specifically, we urged the Faculty Senate to adopt a three-cell evaluation metric in light of requirements coming from the Board of Regents. The Faculty Senate and President Hussey agreed to this restructuring from an initial 5-level performance measure.

Unfortunately, the closing of the campus due to the COVID-19 outbreak eliminated any chance of further work during this year.

e) Piper Award Committee

We have had only one application completed and submitted by the imposed deadline, and that will be our 2020/2021 nominee to the Minnie Stevens Piper Award Foundation for next fall. Others across the campus that were nominated elected to not complete the application process for whatever reason(s).

Subsequently, we do have an outstanding candidate, and it shall remain confidential until announced by President Hussey in the Fall.

f) Policy Revision Committee – No Report

g) Handbook Committee Taskforce

Last meeting, we discussed how to create the membership for this committee. She proposes that membership consist of College At-Large Senators of the Faculty Senate. She would like the incoming senate to take the reins and go through the official process of voting on this in the May meeting.

Before he concluded the 2019-2020 Senate, President Anoruo thanked and expressed his appreciation to all of the outgoing senators, executive committee members, and committee chairs for all of their work this year.

VII. New Business

a) Incoming President Ari Sherris' Thank You to Outgoing FS President Ambrose Anoruo

President Ari Sherris: Before I officially open the Faculty Senate's first meeting of our New Faculty Senate year, I want to thank Dr. Ambrose Anorou who did some heavy lifting as President of the Faculty Senate. I want to express gratitude to Dr. Anorou for his big picture leadership style; for embracing and respecting different conversational styles, even when they were noisy and boisterous; for setting up his own meetings with President Hussey when the Senate raised serious concerns that shared governance was not at play and for tirelessly responding to emails from faculty to address their professional needs. As Dr. Anorou said, "if we are not at the policy table we are on the menu," quoting a Nigerian proverb. Thank you.

b) Silent Prayer, Welcome New Senators, Our FS Constitutional Roles

President Ari Sherris: Before we begin let's take a moment and silently consider those who have lost their lives to coronavirus, those who are struggling to live, the first responders worldwide, scientist searching for a vaccine, families whose loved ones are in danger, and all of us whose lives have been disrupted in a world in need of healing.
[Silence]

Today we are welcoming 14 Senators who begin their first year of their two-year terms and 27 Senators who begin the second year of their two-year terms. Before we start the decision making process today, I'd like to spend a few minutes addressing our mandate as Senators.

My brief summary is drawn directly from Article 2 of the A&M Kingsville Faculty Senate Constitution.

The faculty senate is an advisory body to the President of the University. We provide advice on the establishing of curricula, setting standards of instruction, determining requirements for degrees, and in general determining the educational policies of the University.

We as a Senate also share in the consideration of principles governing faculty salaries, faculty salary raises, tenure, promotions, appointments, dismissals of faculty members, leaves, work load, retirement, and all matters affecting the welfare of the faculty.

We share in the consideration of principles governing such student affairs as orientation and guidance, financial aid and scholarship, extracurricular activities, student standards of behavior, student housing, and student rights.

As Senators, we participate in the consideration of principles governing official University publications.

And while the Faculty Senate recognizes the special competencies of the several departments and Colleges of the University in matters pertaining to their respective disciplines, the Faculty Senate reserves the right to review any actions of these administrative units which affect the University as a whole and to make recommendations concerning them to the President of the University.

Under most circumstances, the President of the University should concur with the Faculty Senate's advice and recommendations on matters where the faculty has primary responsibility, subject to the laws of the State of Texas and the general policies of the Board of Regents of the Texas A&M University System.

Once again, my brief summary is drawn directly from Article 2 of the A&M Kingsville Faculty Senate Constitution. Please get to know it! [Faculty Senate Constitution](#).

Now something from me. As Senator among equals, I hope that we will work together, step up, stand up and speak up for social justice, community, and faculty empowerment.

I hope that we will create the conditions to be heard, to sit at many policy tables to effect the changes that are necessary in the spirit of shared governance for fair and equitable pay and fair and equitable teaching loads commensurate with standards and practices of institutions of comparable size and ranked with a high research classification on the Carnegie metric.

On our way to that end, albeit at the very beginning of our journey together, the Faculty Senate of 40 Senators soon take a secret vote online for the Executive Committee slate.

As President of the Senate, I do not vote. I am the tie breaker. Before we vote, I will open the floor for any Senator who would freely challenge the ballot and nominate themselves. Nominations from the floor do not require seconding. If you nominate

yourself, the Chair grants you one minute to deliver a nomination speech followed by one minute for the slated Senator to speak on their own behalf.

If there are nominations from the floor, please raise your electronic hand, keyboard your name in the chat and the college or Department you represent. Then keyboard, I nominate myself for the position of XXX.

[Anonymous elections held via Microsoft forms]

c) Election of Executive Committee and Officers

President-Elect: Jieming Chen
Parliamentarian: Patricia Huskin
Secretary: Christine Radcliff
College of Ag & Natural Resources: Tanner Machado
College of Arts & Sciences: Jeff Glick
College of Business Admin: Kathleen Rees
College of Ed & Human Performance: Kelly Hall
College of Engineering: Patrick Mills

d) Election of Members to the Senate Standing Committees

i. Committee on Committees

College of Ag & Natural Resources: Alinna Umphreys
College of Arts & Sciences: Subbarao Yelisetti
College of Business Admin: William Procasky
College of Ed & Human Performance: Amber Shipherd
College of Engineering: Matthew Alexander
Library: Christine Radcliff
Additional Senators: Mais Nijim, Nick J. Sciallo

ii. Elections Committee

Robert Kowalsky
Steven Lukefahr
Patrick Mills
Christine Radcliff
Teresa Young

iii. Resolutions and By-Laws

College of Ag & Natural Resources: Humberto Perotto
College of Arts & Sciences: Rudolf Bohm
College of Business Admin: Kendra Huff
College of Ed & Human Performance: Patricia Huskin
College of Engineering: Lifford McLauchlan
Library: Christine Radcliff

e) Motions to be discussed

President Sherris had a series of slides with prepared motions on them that he brought to the Senate. He reminded everyone that motions need to be seconded in order to be discussed. Seconding only means you are in favor of discussing the motion.

i. Motion 1 – Senator Rudolf Bohm

This motion was brought forward and read by Senator Bohm. The motion reads as follows:

Whereas a number of decisions have been made in the past where administrators have asked executives or the executive committee to speak on behalf of the Faculty Senate to adverse effect, the Senate President is called on to clarify to administrators that decisions can no longer be made by Senate Presidents or administrators on behalf of the Faculty Senate and in the Faculty Senate's name and that all decisions put before the university must be first brought before the Faculty Senate before any decision is made (in emergencies an email to all Faculty Senators suffices).

In addition, this motion puts forward the following to the Resolution and By-Laws committee to be brought back to the Faculty Senate for deliberation as a Constitutional Amendment: No decisions (i.e., motions, resolutions, or recommendations) may be made by the Senate President alone or by the Faculty Senate Executive Committee or any other Faculty Senate Committee or ad-hoc committee of the Faculty Senate) without a vote by the Faculty Senate. At the minimum, notification of all proposals put forward by administrators must be emailed to the Faculty Senate before any decision is made by the Faculty Senate.

The motion was seconded by Senator McLaughlan.

Senator Hall asked a question about how would voting on emergency items (like last week) be handled in terms of process. It is unclear in this motion.

Senator Bohm replied that he feels that, that is the reason that sending an email is mentioned to make sure everyone knows what is happening and given the opportunity to vote via said email.

Senator Rees said she understands the intent and that there have been situations that arose causing this motion to be brought forward. She thinks that there are issues of smaller magnitude where the Senate President is asked to make a recommendation, and she would hate to have the president of the senate have their hands tied by having to bring everything to the full senate.

Senator Miller responded that there are two values to this motion. It is valuable for the ??? (garbled sound) and how we operate, but it is also valuable because in the past, as a past president, there was no guidance that said how these things should be handled. To address what Senator Rees said about timing, we may need to talk about what kinds of things would fall under this motion. He said that he is not too concerned having to take things to the full senate, as long as it can be done electronically.

Senator Bohm added that most of the concern is that the senate is only an advisory body anyway, so they can make their decision without us, but just don't do it in our name. The second point is about notification. We can be notified if that is how the senate president has decided that it is a go. Historically decisions have seemed to have been made in the executive committee, but you don't find out about them until there is an email from the Provost. He just wants the full senate to be in the loop when things go on, which can be accomplished by sending an email.

There was a friendly amendment by Senator Bohm to split this motion into two parts. Senator Liang seconded.

Now that the motion was split into two the first motion was read again as follows:

Whereas a number of decisions have been made in the past where administrators have asked executives or the executive committee to speak on behalf of the Faculty Senate to adverse effect, the Senate President is called on to clarify to administrators that decisions can no longer be made by Senate Presidents or administrators on behalf of the Faculty Senate and in the Faculty Senate's name and that all decisions put before the university must be first brought before the Faculty Senate before any decision is made (in emergencies an email to all Faculty Senators suffices).

If this motion is passed by a simple majority then President Sherris will sign it. He will then it along to the President of the University, they will talk about it, and if he so chooses to sign it too it will go up on the Faculty Senate website with two signatures as has been past practice under Faculty Senate President Bruce Schueneman in 2009.

The motion was approved.

The second part of the motion was read again as follows:

In addition, this motion puts forward the following to the Resolution and By-Laws committee to be brought back to the

Faculty Senate for deliberation as a Constitutional Amendment: No decisions (i.e., motions, resolutions, or recommendations) may be made by the Senate President alone or by the Faculty Senate Executive Committee or any other Faculty Senate Committee or ad-hoc committee of the Faculty Senate) without a vote by the Faculty Senate. At the minimum, notification of all proposals put forward by administrators must be emailed to the Faculty Senate before any decision is made by the Faculty Senate.

The motion was approved.

Senator Huff mentioned that there should have been an option to abstain on the first two electronic votes. Senators Perotto and Meyer agreed.

Senator Hall moved the motion to reconsider, and it was seconded by Senator McLauchlan.

The revote for [Motion 1](#) passed with a vote count of 27 yes, 4 no, 1 abstain.

Before the revote on the second part of Motion 1 Senator Miller brought forward a concern about the wording of that motion. He said that by adding in “or any other Faculty Senate Committee or ad-hoc committee of the Faculty Senate” that would have to go to the full senate causes concern about things like the Piper and the Faculty Lecture committees whose information is supposed to be confidential.

Senator Rees also agreed with this line of thinking.

It was moved by Senator Rees to withdraw the original wording for the second part of Motion 1. Senator Kowalsky seconded.

It was then moved by Senator Bohm that the second part of Motion 1 will read as follows:

This motion is put forward to the Resolutions and By-Laws committee for consideration as a Constitutional Amendment.

This change was seconded by Senator Hall.

The [second part of Motion 1](#) passed with a vote count of 26 yes, 3 no, 3 abstain.

Senator Bohm later requested “that those people with concerns about the language email me their concerns at rudolf.bohm@tamuk.edu. I will try to work with everyone to create something limited that fulfills the purpose of protecting the democracy”.

ii. **Motion 2 – President Ari Sherris**

This motion was brought forward and read by President Sherris. The motion reads as follows:

That any changes to the Faculty Handbook (e.g., faculty annual review or faculty post tenure review, including the substitution of forms for such reviews) go through the process defined by the Texas A&M University-Kingsville Faculty Constitution; any process that curtails or circumvents the faculty constitutional process is a serious breach of trust in the highest deliberative body of the A&M Kingsville faculty, its Faculty Senate, and constitutes a serious breach in shared governance. This motion is put forward to the Resolutions and By-Laws committee for consideration as a Constitutional Amendment.

The motion was seconded by Senator McLaughlan.

Senator Hall asked if there is something in the Faculty Handbook that speaks to this?

President Sherris said that yes there is a form in appendix III of the current Faculty Handbook that has gone through the Constitutional process and was accepted. That form is aligned with the current policy of the A&M System, a policy that will not be changing until 2025. The process that President Ambrose went through with the “new form” does not match up with our handbook at this time. [Faculty Handbook](#)

Senator Hall then asked if we really need this motion, or is it already implicit, but someone is not following the rules?

President Sherris responded that yes, the rules are not being followed as the “new form” was being discussed with Deans and Department Chairs and was not brought to the Faculty Senate for two votes.

Senator Rees asked to make a point of clarification that we are not talking about policy related to faculty, we are only talking about changes to the Faculty Handbook.

President Sherris responded that her statement is correct.

[Motion 2](#) passed with a vote count of 23 yes, 5 no, 4 abstain.

iii. **[Motion 3](#)**

This motion was read by President Sherris.

The motion was seconded by Senator Radcliff.

A vote was taken by show of hands and passed unanimously.

VIII. Announcements

President Sherris shared this information regarding future Motions & Resolutions

- Please email all motions and resolutions to FacultySenateOfficers@tamuk.edu no later than Tuesday, April 21, 2020, 5:00 pm CST if you would like the Executive Committee to add them to the Tuesday, May 5, 2020 Faculty Senate Agenda.
- May 5, 2020 is our last regularly scheduled Faculty Senate meeting until our Fall 2020 Faculty Senate meeting which is scheduled for Tuesday, September 1, 2020 from 3:30 pm – 5:00 pm.
- Senators may raise motions and resolutions from the floor rather than submit them to the EC, but should have them ready in writing as in the format on earlier slides for this meeting to save time.

IX. Adjournment

At 6:30pm a motion to adjourn was made by Senator Radcliff and seconded by Senator Bohm, motion was passed.

Respectfully Submitted,
Christine Radcliff
Faculty Senate Secretary, 2019-2020

Faculty Senate Annual Report 2019-2020

It is difficult to enumerate all the little things achieved by the 2019-2020 Senate but this report details some issues that were fundamentally lacking at this university about faculty treatment and representation. The senate in the past had focused on the little things each senate achieved at the end of the senate year but never paid attention to entrenching the Faculty Senate as a member of the university decision making. Having served as President of Faculty Senate at two different universities as well as an upper level administrator at Texas A&M University-Kingsville (TAMUK), the 2019-2020 Senate worked to entrench the Faculty Senate in the governance of TAMUK whenever the opportunity occurred. It seems to me, having been at this university for 10 ten years, that faculty distrust of the administration originated from governance by intimidation which could date back to over 15 years, but the administration has changed and TAMUK now has a President whose administration is devoted to faculty welfare, excellence in teaching, research and creative work, and public service. It is time to put the past behind to face the future and work with the new administration.

In the 2019-2020 Senate Year, the senate in collaboration with the university administration achieved the following matters of faculty interest and benefit:

- Secured a budget dependent promissory implementation of summer faculty salary in 2021 to either 8.33% or 6.67% for teaching in the summer or one month faculty salary for a full summer load.
- Filled all senate committee positions with beginning and ending tenure dates. This is one of the hardest jobs for any Senate President but critical for the smooth functioning of the university. This feat was achieved by collaborating with the Division of Academic Affairs to engage the deans.
- Secured the one-time merit pay.
- Succeeded in getting merit salary pay raise to be considered as a component of the 2021-2022 university budget.
- Secured the anonymous feedback box.
- Succeeded in deleting the mandatory annual trigger for remedial review of tenured faculty from faculty annual evaluation, and reduced the number of check boxes from five to three.
- Succeeded in securing increased budget in the next fiscal year to accommodate travel for Senate President and President Elect.
- Succeeded in making the Faculty Senate a member of the University Emergency Team; an indication of shared governance.
- Succeeded in making the Faculty Senate a member of the University Traffic Board; an indication of shared governance.
- Succeeded in making the Faculty Senate President a signatory on emergency and unusual communications to the faculty. This is a testimony of faculty input in decision making, and an indication shared governance.
- Succeeded in making the Faculty Senate a member of the University Master Plan Evaluation Committee.

Although these examples are important to show senate achievement in a senate year, senate leaders must work to make the senate a component of the decision making of the university by collaborating with the administration, and by avoiding grandstanding. This was the focus of the 2019-2020 senate and was achieved in many ways as outlined above.

Having said that, the 2020-2021 senate must give priority attention to the issues listed below else the efforts of the 2019-2020 senate will be lost. One year tenure of each senate leadership is too short to institutionalize achievements. This has been a problem with the Faculty Senate i.e. there had not been continuity of senate matters raised by the previous senate hence successive senates never achieved long lasting resolutions of some faculty matters. Therefore, it is recommended that the 2020-2021 senate incorporates the following in its Action Plan and give priority to their implementation:

- Summer Compensation: Senate must dialog with the administration about faculty summer compensation to work out the specifics.
- Overload compensation and/or faculty banked hours: Senate has worked on this previously but there does not seem to be a TAMUK underlying policy for it in the Handbook. Specifics are required in the Faculty Handbook.
- Faculty base pay raise: Senate should work with the administration so it can receive a concrete feedback of its request upon approval of the 2021-2022 university budget by Austin.
- Anonymous box: The senate must find a way to get the faculty to start using the anonymous feedback to the university. Also, the Senate President and the Executive Committee should discuss with the University President about feedback received anonymously i.e. declassification of some of the information received from the faculty.
- The senate should continue to dialog with the administration to make the deleted paragraph of the annual evaluation of tenured faculty permanent.

Note of caution: Faculty Senate leadership must bear in mind that the faculty cannot get all it requests of the administration. No university and no administration that I know of grants every faculty request because the administration, from its vantage point, has a broader scope of the university than the faculty. Open minded dialog resolves even the most difficult circumstances.

Ambrose O. Anoruo, Ph.D.

Faculty Senate President
2019-2020

**Benefits Committee
April 2020 Update**

Per Mr. Henry Burgos's permission, the Benefits Committee is sharing a summary from the March 30, 2020, email that he sent to all faculty and staff, which contained the following information from SEBAC:

- The wellness incentive program completion date has been extended to August 31, 2020, in which many of the activities can be fulfilled virtually.
- As of March 16, A&M Care plan members, as well as those on the student insurance and graduate student employee plan, can receive telemedicine services from their network physicians for a \$0 copay until April 30, provided that the claim indicates that the services were through telemedicine/telehealth.
- From March 16 until further notice, the co-payments, co-insurance, and deductibles for COVID-19 testing consistent with the guidance issued by the CDC have been waived by all A&M System health plans.
- From March 19 until further notice, the copay for MDLIVE telehealth services has been temporarily reduced to a \$0 copay for all A&M Care members. However, for the student insurance and graduate student employee plan, this \$0 copay is through April 30.
- For both retail pharmacies and mail-order, Express Scripts has authorized payment to pharmacies for up to a 90-day supply of any prescription medication for individuals provided the member has refills remaining.
- Due to daycare closures and work-from-home mandates, enrolled employees are eligible to reduce their dependent day care flexible spending account contributions through a Life Event Benefit Change, which can be changed again when they return to work since it will still be considered a Life Event.

A good question brought up by one of the committee members:

When a faculty member retires, do they get to keep their TAMUK email account or does the university email ends just like when a student graduates or drops out of the university?

Answer: A retiree account is created while the employee still has their normal TAMUK email account. There is a 60 day overlap of accounts to allow the employee/retiree to copy or forward any email that is wanted to their retiree email.